REMARKS

The Election/Restriction Requirement mailed June 10, 2003 stated the claims were directed to more than one species of the generic invention. The Election/Restriction Requirement divided the claims into three species:

Species A: method of preventing an unsafe message from reaching a blasting network by preventing the onward transmission of the unsafe message;

Species B: method of preventing an unsafe message from reaching a blasting network by scrambling the unsafe message; and

Species C: method of preventing an unsafe message from reaching a blasting network by ignoring the unsafe message.

Claim 8 has been amended to clarify the language and remove the language listed for Species C. This amendment is supported by the specification on page 2, lines 29 and 30.

Species A (preventing the onward transmission of the unsafe message) and Species C (ignoring the unsafe message) are the same, as noted in the specification on page 2, lines 29 and 30 ("the or each unsafe message may be prevented from reaching the blasting network simply by ignoring the message and not allowing its onward transmission"). In addition, the description of the drawings indicates Species A and C are the same. On page 5, lines 13-18, Figure 2 is described: "As indicated, by connecting the blasting system 16 to the Internet 10 a potential safety risk is introduced due to the possibility being created that hackers can penetrate the system. This risk is eliminated, or at least substantially reduced, by making use of the communication fire wall 14 to selectively filter out unsafe or dangerous commands like 'arm', which results in the blasting network being armed, and 'fire' which causes the blasting network to be initiated." In addition, figure 3 is described on page 6. On page 6, lines 14 and 15, it is stated "If a designated unsafe message is detected, it is collected but simply ignored (step 50)". At page 6, line 26 to 29, it is stated "It is however not possible to transmit a

designated unsafe message to the network 16 unless the communication link 20 has been placed in its operation mode, i.e. unless the filter 26 has been deactivated." In view of the above arguments, it is clear that ignoring an unsafe message so that it is not transmitted and preventing the onward transmission of an unsafe message are the same thing.

Because Species A and C are the same and there are no claims directed to Species C, it is believed the Election/Restriction Requirement should be withdrawn with respect to Species A and C. Applicant elects the species of A/C, with traverse. Claims 1, 2, 5-8 and 11-17 read on the elected species.
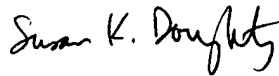
Applicant traverses the Election/Restriction requirement because the claims are directed to the same general inventive concept, in accordance with PCT Rule 13.1. The general inventive concept is preventing an unsafe message from reaching a blasting network in a control mode of a system for controlling a blasting system. All claims are directed to this general inventive concept. In addition, a lack of unity of invention objection was not made in the International Phase of the corresponding PCT application. Also, it is believed it would not present an undue burden to examine all the claims together.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that a fee in the amount of $110.00 for a one-month extension of time is due with the submission of this Amendment. This fee, as well as a petition requesting this extension of time, is included with this response. If the fee enclosed is incorrect, however, please charge any additional fee, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 07-1969.

Respectfully submitted,

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